



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

SEPTEMBER 1988

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Witness is the essential mission and responsibility of every Christian and of every church. All disciples stand under the Great Commission of the One Lord.

The purpose of witness is to persuade people to accept the Supreme authority of Christ, to commit themselves to Him and to render Him long service in the fellowship of His Church. The witness of Christians to Jesus Christ requires personal testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus can reflect the truth in its fullness. Even when inwardly compelled to testify against that which appears erroneous in some other religious belief or practice, the true witness cannot but be humble and honest. Such witness seeks a response which contributes to the upbuilding of the fellowship of those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ.

—Churchman 1957

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Community Communication

LAMBADI TRIBE



Lambadies are one of the oldest nomadic tribes in India. Their movements have been known for over 2500 years. It has been established that the Lambadies originated from old Rajputana where they were mainly salt traders and merchants living on the outskirts of the cities. Recent research shows that they migrated towards Central Asia and Europe from Afghanistan and Greece. The similarities discovered between the Roma Gypsies and the Lambadies are striking: the link between both communities are not only linguistic but also cultural in terms of dressing and in the performing of certain ceremonies.

In the 14th Century, the Moghul army used the Lambadies and their herd to carry arms and provisions in the conquest of the Deccan. Thus the Lambadies reached South India. When this duty ended, they started trading with their cattle and became a useful medium of transaction between the North and South. Their wide knowledge of places and people was put to use by various rulers who employed them as the intelligence corps. For example, they were spies for both camps during the struggle between Tippu Sultan of Mysore and the British.

The introduction of modern means of transport by the governments superseded their economic function and the Lambadies were forced to settle down. Their only wealth being cattle, they settled near forests where there were vacant lands for pasture. The unseen majority of the Lambadies are now farmers and herdsman in rural areas. Their village or *thanda* is mainly located in isolated drought-prone areas. Their backwardness has limited their access

to modern education and agricultural aid but, has at the same time, preserved their traditional culture and organisation.

In 1896 the authorities declared them a criminal tribe. No doubt some of them were driven to crime by the misery of their situation but this status was conferred essentially to control them in case of their revolt against the new state of affairs.

Today, the Lambadi Community spread over 21 Indian states mainly Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, forms the largest tribe with more than 10 million members. According to the All India Lambadi Seva Sangh of 1968, they are divided into 17 subgroups and are known under at least 27 synonyms such as Banjara, Labhan, Sugali, Baladia etc. The word Banjara is derived from the sanskrit word *vanijyam* which means trade; Lambadi comes from *Lavan*, salt and Sugali is a Telugu word which means people rearing good cows.

In Southern Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka some are still forced to make seasonal migrations because their unirrigated land does not provide enough to live on all the year round.

The popular view of the Lambadi is one of women bedecked with shimmering costumes, weighed down with silver and ivory ornaments. One often thinks of them as unsociable even while accepting their value, particularly the women, as labourers of quality, robust and reliable. Out of the cities, because of their isolated situation, they have little

contact with other communities and are often regarded with suspicion. But the Lambadi society gives great importance to women in the household and everyday village Life. They share with the men all domestic discussions and even discussions concerning the village by exerting their influence over their menfolk. It is the women who welcome a visitor to **thanda**.

Any occasion is good for dancing and singing. To the beat of **nagaras** the women throw their arms to the moon, bend their graceful bodies like labourers in the field, singing out their song to the rhythm of their ivory clad arms, their copper feet on the ground.

The silver, brass and ivory ornaments the women wear can weigh anything upto four kilos. Today Silver has been replaced by aluminium and ivory or bone bangles by plastic. Anklets, round hair ornaments the **ghoogari**, worn above two toplis, and bangles above the elbow indicate that the woman is married. The tattoos, they believe, are the only things which pass from this world to the next. The mirrors on their dress are there to scare off the wild animals when they go into the forest for firewood. In the same way, the jingling anklets are intended to frighten away the snakes.

The traditional tongue of the Lambadies has roots which are not found in any of the fourteen recognised languages of India. Words for parts of the body, clothing and professions are unique to this tongue and some Sanskrit words point to a very ancient origin. In each state Lambadi dialect borrows freely from the local language. Though **gor boli** is traditionally an unwritten language, recently Devanagari script has come to be used and sometimes a regional script such as Telugu. Rev. B. E. Devaraj, brought out four Gospels using Telugu script. The communications Department has produced ten cassettes which are being used all over and found them to be an effective method of communication.

Of all the areas, Dornakal diocese has a large number of Lambadi Christians. There are Christians in the dioceses of Medak, Karnataka North and Krishna & Godavari. Under the project **Community Communication**, the Department with an aim to communicate the Gospel has initiated several programmes in Lambadi language by making use of the existing art forms of the tribe. Colour slides, photographs, posters, audio and Video cassettes are in the making. Some cassettes and slides on the parables which were produced with the Lambadi actors are also in circulation.

—DASS BABU.

I AM YOUR TEMPLE, LORD

I am your temple, Lord—

I, whatever corner I stand on,

I left my dedication to you in church last Sunday.

*I left you like so much dust in the
carpet threads of the centre isle,*

and I trampled mankind all week long.

Forgive me.

Hymnals, Pianos, carpets and pews.

And you Lord?

*Is that really you in the wood Cross and the stained
glass*

And the portrait on the wall?

*Or are you in this temple
that I wear every day*

Out in the winds of discontent

Out in the rain of unhappy lives

and the sunlight of love that shows?

You are stirring inside me, Lord.

*My well-trimmed heartless walls are cracking,
the light is coming through!*

Your temple is on the move!

Send me, Lord!

Send me.

—From Prayers from A Woman's Heart

Ecumenism and Universality

REV. JOHN BLUCK*

My grandmother was brought up on a farm called Vine Grove, near Creswick outside Ballarat, and until she was 18 she never had the chance to see the ocean. Her story of how it felt to stand on the shores of Melbourne and look out on the sea for the first time remains a vivid memory, but its nothing like as vivid as her story of what she used to imagine the sea was like, living as a girl on the Vine Grove farm. She would wander off by herself across fields of grass and watch them billow in the summer wine, undulating ripples of green. In those waves, she could smell the salt and see the whales play. Merchant vessels by the fleet-full made their way under sail across the paddocks of Vine Grove.

One of the basic definitions of ecumenism I began with is the experience of belonging to the Universal church and that's as much a matter of imagining and expecting as it is of seeing and realizing right here and now.

My grandmother would not have called herself an ecumenist. She was a devout 8 a.m., 1662 Anglican, yet she knew that God called her to belong to the whole wide world and the worldwide church more surely and confidently than the trendiest jet-setting ecumenist you could find today. She knew that from her experience in that Vine Grove farm, and on the strength of that knowing, set out alone at the age of 18 to catch a sailing ship from Melbourne to Kalgoorlie via Perth where she set up a milliner's shop and earned her living as a citizen of the world, free to belong and travel anywhere in and across it, even eventually to New Zealand.

I tell that story to begin with because the first difficulty we have with ecumenism as universality is the sheer inaccessibility and remoteness of such a concept, especially when you live in places like this at the bottom of the earth, even if we can produce maps to show we're actually at the top. Ecumenism too often becomes something dependent on your access to travel agents, particularly the ones that specialize in cut-rate fares to Europe and the States. It's an experience bound up with geography and distance (and the further away and more exotic the better it is), rather than territories of the imagination and spirit, available right here at home for the exploring and the taking. And because we divorce ecumenism in this way from any sort of immediately accessible experience, we end up with something that is slightly unreal and always at arm's length, unless of course you can travel to that magic land called Overseas where everything is more meaningful and relevant than it is at home. In New Zealand we're into our third generation of young people who read Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' at school and thought it was an airline advertisement, promising charmed

magic casements, opening on the foam, of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. More prosaically, we call it Overseas Experience now. You can't stay home without it.

Put ecumenism into this sort of transcendent category and it becomes about as easy to get hold of as a person of the Trinity. In fact this sort of ecumenism reminds me of a story about the party of tourists being shown around Trinity College, Cambridge, when they came to view the four spires that adorn the roof of that building. 'These are the four spires representing the Trinity,' said the guide. 'How come there are four?' asked a theologically astute member of the party. 'Why, there's father, son, holy spirit and the one true God, of course,' replied the guide.

Now some will accuse me of facetiousness in setting up ecumenism so ethereally in this way, and point to their own real-life experience of the universal church in this assembly or that conference or those international visitors. I don't want to deny that, for I live off the capital of such experiences myself, but the more I think about them, the more I suspect that the ones I like most are the ones I have homogenized and sanitized to fit into and feed the security of my faith, rather than open me up to anything new.

Because much ecumenical encounter treats the universal church like tourism treats the world as part of a scenario in which the heavenly city ends up reduced to the proportions of Disneyland. Now, the most important and distinctive thing about Disneyland is that its manageable. It's clean and wholesome, there's plenty of food and toilets and, best of all, everything is in English, except the signs on the roller coasters saying Keep Your Head Down. They were in Spanish last time I was there, and it left me wondering what that says about people who speak spanish. Perhaps Mr. Disney thought they only needed advice in their own language when they were about to do something stupid.

We treat the universal church in much the same way, concentrating on the parts that we can cope with—that speak English and confirm our political bias for or against capitalism or communism, that show women and men acting in much the same way as we do, or so outrageously differently that we can laugh about it, that exhibit a piety that leaves out the same sorts of issues and begs the same sorts of questions as our piety.

When we start to talk about ecumenism as belonging to the universal church, we start with one hand tied behind our back, because we invariably mean something too remote and far away geographically, or too remote and ethereal spiritually, or something so neat and manageable that we bring it home like a set of slides and it doesn't make a scrap of difference to anyone.

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How then do we begin to do justice to what a full-blooded and bodied ecumenism might mean for our understanding of faith? First, I think, by insisting that whatever truth or beauty ecumenism might have, it has to be somehow available and accessible to us where and as we are. We don't have to leave home to find it, nor do we have to become someone else. We start to look for the ecumenical vision, not in ethereal and general terms but in very concrete and particular things; not in far-away, exotic places but locally, right here.

But to do any of that localizing and particularizing of the universal church is made difficult by some very muddled mindsets and false choices that we seem to have inherited. They incline us towards setting the local over against the universal, even though that choice is not offered by New Testament Christianity.

Lukas Vischer, formerly Director of the WCC's Faith and Order secretariat, writing back at the time of the Uppsala Assembly, argued that the local-universal contrast was an unfruitful point of departure for the ecumenical movement. He showed that it was a distinction borrowed from the political management vocabulary of the Roman Empire, full of assumptions about hierarchical structure and power quite unsuitable for a missionary movement. The question of relationship between the whole and the individual parts only became dominant when the church became static, Vischer argues, and from that point the distinction between church as totality and church as local gathering became vastly overplayed. In fact the New Testament word for church—ecclesia—doesn't make any distinction between individual church and the whole people of God. The New Testament understanding of local church, says Vischer, is primarily the 'gathering' of Christians in a certain place. And for this reason the stress is more on the fellowship than on the geographic place. So the individual church is primarily 'gathering'. The place is of only secondary importance. For this reason the church can appear in various sociological forms. It exists wherever people allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit into a committed fellowship.

The logistics of the kingdom mean that we are not dependent on place or distance or size or numbers or any other such quantitative measure for meaning and value before God. Because of that freedom, we are able to be one people in many places, or in ecclesiastical language, a conciliar fellowship, all in each place. That's the real miracle. Again, in Vischer's words:

The church is one people in many places. It is not a structure to which the congregations are subordinated, and the individual local congregations are not parts in the sense that they form the church only when they are joined to make a whole. Since Christ is wholly and directly present in each individual part, each individual part is church; Christ's presence is not transmitted to the individual church by some totality to which it is subordinate. The church in Corinth is the body of Christ; it is not merely a member of the body of Christ. This does not mean that the churches do not belong together. Precisely because Christ is present in all of them, they are closely connected and must also prove this bond. But the universal church is a fellowship of local churches and can appear only as such a fellowship.

Membership in the universal church remains something out there, something beyond what other people and places

can do better until we see that Christ is wholly and fully present, as sufficient and complete in each place and in this place as he is in all places.

Now if that is true, then the local-universal, contrast as a way into the heart of the ecumenical experience, is a red herring of whale-size proportion. It's the one credit card we can always afford to leave home without.

Moreover, if this local-universal connection really is inter-meshed in this way, then it lets us trust some other wise rather ordinary and seemingly insignificant thing lying about on the local landscape. If the universal Christ really is so immediately and unqualifiedly available and present, then the signs of his presence surround us like the air we breathe. And if the universal church is really represented in each place in the same way then our catholicity and our diversity can in no way ever be dependent on our access to airline tickets.

Out of all the scandals that the ecumenical movement has been happy to entertain, the one it has found hardest is the scandal of particularity. Why? Because it involves putting all your theological eggs in one basket and being very specific and very down to earth about what you think God is up to, and just where its taking place.

The most explosive reaction I ever encountered in seven years on the staff of the World Council of Churches came not through dealing with the Programme to Combat Racism (although that was controversial precisely because it was so particular) but with the judging of a poster contest for the Vancouver Assembly. One of the winning entries depicted the outline of a cross, framed by the words—Jesus Christ—the life of the world' in several languages. Several, but not every language. And the uproar came when several delegates found that the language of their particular people wasn't represented. To accept the sampling of languages on the poster as symbol of incarnation in a particular place, representing incarnation in all places, was too much to ask. So we settled for a bit of this and a bit of that language with argument about their relative importances and grammatical exactnesses.

When it comes to the crunch, we shy away from precision about God's presence, God's willingness to be so totally available in such limited and prescribed ways in places. But instead of evoking this scandal of particularity, irony of ironies, the ecumenical movement more often conjures up images of uniformity instead.

Ernst Lange, in his ecumenical classic *And Yet It Moves* believes it is the most severely imaginable indictment of the churches that they 'had to be taught the thousand and one variations of the maxim "black is beautiful"' that they felt threatened by challenges from 'underground churches and oppressed minorities and demands, and that their missions to dying cultures be halted where the mission was hastening the death.

We betray the particularly of the gospel by the cult of uniformity, says Lange, just as we betray the universal of the gospel with the blanket of parochialism. A parochialism, for Lange, is not being local, but rather refusing to see the universal in the local. Why is it that we hesitate to trust the particular, fearful that we may overload its value and meaning, unwilling to believe, Blake believed, that we may 'see the world in a grain sand'?

I have at home a small leather cross, given to me by Bishop Samuel of the Egyptian Coptic Church, as a token of friendship and trust. He was a quiet, intense little man whose experience and spirituality was impossibly foreign to me, yet the cross he gave me, after a very difficult meeting that made our differences even greater, helped me bridge a gap I could never have even assassinated, along with President Sadat and other Egyptian leaders, on a parade ground in Cairo, and we saw him in a television news clip, carried away on a stretcher in a black and bloody bundle. The meaning of the leather cross became too much after that. I could no longer wear it round my neck for any length of time. It's particularity was too intense and I looked to lighter, blander symbols of faith and sacrifice and friendship.

So it is with ecumenical symbols and friendships. We prefer to forget them or embalm them, without letting them speak too loudly or too long. All of us are surrounded by memories and symbols of faith experiences that are so precious and pregnant with meaning that we can't bear to linger over them. Whether they come from next door or from the other side of the world matters not a scrap. They have value beyond price, they are foundational to our own faith and hope, they speak to us of a world beyond our own experience like the billowing grass did for my grandmother outside Ballarat, and they help us to keep going when we've run out of reasons for believing much of anything.

A scrap of conversation remembered, the image of a much-loved face, a gesture of friendship, a sacrificial gift, an epiphany moment on an empty beach, a great passion, a devastating failure, a resurrection experience—very personal, very particular, ecumenical because such fragments spring out of every corner of the church across the whole canvas of creation. They belong to the very frame and timber of God's house. God's *oikos*; we'd never dare to claim them exclusively for our own denominational or cultural domain.

These are the ecumenical symbols that endure. If we had a movement that trusted them, began with them, and looked to them when crisis and confusion came, instead of trying to import something or someone from outside or overseas, then ecumenical wouldn't still be a word that hardly anybody knows how to spell.

Such symbols do become universal but they don't start out that way. They begin in ordinary, limited, local settings through ordinary, limited, local people who stear the glimpse of beauty and truth that has come their way and leave someone else to decide whether it has any universal significance or not. The leather worker in the desert monastery who made Bishop Samuel's cross would not have known about the ecumenical endurance of his work, nor would he have known that his sense of belonging to, being rooted in that bleak desert place, was itself a prerequisite for ecumenical meaning and value.

It seems that the success of any universal dialogue is directly proportional to the number and depth of the local, particular pieces that go to make it up. We can only contribute to the whole if we really belong to a part; if we've been able to discover, celebrate and if necessary repent of who we are and where we stand. I've always

been fascinated to see how embedded each of the general secretaries of the World Council have been in their particular culture and how, as they each became more and more identified with the universality of the movement, so they became more of a Dutchman, or a West Indian or an American or, now, a Latin American. The people who had least to contribute had let go of those roots, in exchange for Swiss neutrality and a kind of spiritual androgyny.

There is something very physical about this ecumenical prerequisite I'm talking about. For some, it involves belonging to something like a piece of soil or a landscape, or being anchored in a community and a set of relationships. For others it involves losing oneself in a particular craft or artform or manual skill or area of knowledge. It may involve something outside your body, or within your body like an illness or a disability, but whatever it is there is a dimension of embodiment involved, something physical and tangible that makes it a matter of incarnation for you, and eventually a matter of life and death. That, after all, is the grammar of the way God talks.

Yet we never get around to insisting on such a prerequisite in the official ecumenical movement. We ask instead whether people have been good Anglicans or Uniting Churchers or whatever. And that of course is not necessarily a guarantee of any sort of incarnation. In the medieval era the prerequisite for studying theology at university wasn't church membership. It was astrology. You had to be competent at naming and explaining how the world worked before you were permitted to talk about God. The mechanics of creation came first, metaphysics followed later.

That's the missing step in the sequence of today's ecumenical dialogue and that's why it doesn't arouse much excitement in our churches. Because people who listen in on the dialogue don't hear enough of these rooted, incarnated, ensouled and embodied testimonies that tell the story of the faith in terms of the mechanics of God's creation. Those mechanics might involve the nut-and-bolt politics of a small community, the physiology of a body, the dynamics of a marriage, the construction of a house. But whatever they are there's some sort of skill or commitment involved that means an incarnation can take place or had taken place with you as part of the risk. The risk might focus on your job or your status, your role as a man or a woman. Whatever it is, it puts you on the line, physically as well as spiritually, and from there, and only from there, you begin to discover what it means to belong to the universal church.

That for me, then, is the way into this experience of universality that is found in the heart of the ecumenical movement. Our relationship to it is that of the stone mason to the cathedral, the swimmer to the sea. Physical, tangible now, immersed in the wider reality that dwarfs us, engulfs us, yet is as accessible and real to us here as anywhere else.

The wasteful tragedy is that we don't claim this experience of universality that is available to us, all of it, in each place. We leave it buried in the ground around us, in our Australasian soil, where it lies waiting for digging.

Dimensions in Laity Formation

RT. REV. DR. D. POTHIRAJULU
Deputy Moderator

TRAINING Vs. DEVELOPMENT

An Observation :

The Church in India, being one of the younger churches is a growing church. Even when the numerical strength would not increase on account of evangelism, the size of the congregation remains constant or grows steadily as there is not much of falling out as it happens in many of the Western countries. One of the reasons for this constancy is a sociological factor viz. that the Indian family tends to be a closely interdependent family, within itself and in the society. So the entire family adopts religious practices after the parents and sometimes even following the grand parents. This happens in the villages as well as in the cities. This is not to say that there is the absence of pluralistic practices. In some homes children are estranged from church life. But this is not a rule.

The need for Lay Training Programmes :

In such a situation as observed before, the Indian Church seems to be providing various programmes of Christian Education for children and youth only. The adults do not get the attention at least not to the same extent. Caring for the adults, ironical as it may sound, is important since the adults form a crucial part of the Laity of the church. The growth in worship practices, witness and ministry of the church depend primarily on what the Laity are doing and how they are equipped for it.

Training in what sense ?

This raises the question of Training of the Laity. The word training needs to be examined. What do we mean when we say we train? Dolphins can be trained to obey commands; to respond to stimuli; to develop certain habits; to relate to its trainer nicely. Do we say the same thing when we talk about training the laity? How is man unique? Is he unique? Are there Biblical Theological, Psychological and similar insights from other disciplines that we need to take into consideration when we talk about training the laity? And what for? Can we evolve a set of objectives and goals? These are some of the questions we raise to understand the task before us. It is our hope that the clergy will be motivated, through this model to see their role in the congregations as an opportunity to enable Laity to grow into effective witnesses in the world.

Human Resources Development :

This is a modern caption for Lay Training. Let us learn from the Industrial World what is meant by Human Resources Development :

The concept 'Human Resources Development' is being developed by theologians, educationists, sociologists, economists, politicians and last but not least, the business

people. The management views human resources development with a sense of urgency as it relates directly to the goals to be achieved.

The industry of course views people as one of the factors of production. But as much as it is a human resource it is treated by the employer with sensitivity. There are three major factors in the industry which promote the development of human resources :

In the first place the industry is seen as a system for its effectiveness. The system is based on 'a definition of work objectives, the assessment of their achievement and the use of the resultant evidence as the basis for all decisions about the ways in which these resources may be best utilised and developed'.

There is a second category called *the line managers*. The Line Managers in the industry, Tyson and Yorl point out, have a direct and immediate influence on all employees and so they necessarily bear a major responsibility for the effective employment and development of an organisations' human resources.

Thirdly, the industry also has a *Departmental training staff*. They coordinate the task of identifying the training and educational needs of the department, provide programmes and courses designed to meet particular vocation needs within the department. The organisation also makes an assessment of its effect upon work performance and initiate any necessary modifications because of the considerable investment in training. The term 'care development' is also used to describe the work of the line managers and training staff through a variety of job experiences, training and education. Thus—the concern for Human resources development in the industry is a challenge to the church which should be equally concerned if not more about the achievement of its goals and the assessment of the same. The Laity though not a factor of production in the church is certainly a crucial factor to be developed for the fulfilment of the mission of the church. The industry of course offers an excellent model.

'Development' in Theological circles :

It is also important to know how theology is indebted to psychology. F. ROSS KINSLER of WCC Programme on Theological Education helps us to understand Human Development in his meritorious volume *MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE* that he has edited gathering models of Theological Education from regions around the world such as Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, North America, Asia, Australia and Europe. Kinsler observes that, 'the process of development has generally been tied to the dominant pattern of modernisation and economic growth which retain initiative, know-how and decision-making in the hands of a few. The poor remain powerless

continue to be exploited and marginalised. The primary lesson from this tragic experience is that the poor must be the primary agents of their own development'. While Kinsler suggests a wholesome development his primary concern seems to be economic development and rightly so in this case. He also refers to other areas like health—spiritual health—community health and so on.

In the same volume edited by Kinsler, there is an article by Adeolu Adegbola on 'Theological Education and human development' as applied to African churches. Here Adegbola talks about 'development' as development of the people. He refers to programme of integral development based on concepts of authentic participation, appropriate methodology, people's empowerment, requisite skills and the like. He rightly points out that a transmission of accumulated knowledge to produce the cultured persons of the grammar school tradition is not enough.

He also identifies what he calls 'another development' inter-relating economics, sociology, socio-anthropology, psychology, theology and biblical studies with the professional disciplines of agriculture, education, social service, town planning and technological skills.

People who talk about development generally refer to the socio-economic changes which need to be brought about in the society in which people act as the change agents.

While we grant the above concern as imperative for the growth of the people, our emphasis in this model would be more oriented towards 'another development' and in particular the psychological development of the individual which is crucial for becoming an agent of change.

It is our contention that Human Resources Development needs to take a developmental approach essentially including the psychological dimension failing which it would cease to be a leadership development model.

Which much humility, I am drawn to state, that the futility of the recommendations of 'consultations and conferences' on theological concerns, arise out of this lack of provision for a vehicle of implementation viz., developmental models. They are lost, without having an expression in the lives of the people.

Laity Formation—as a Human Resources Development Model :

Human Resources Development is development of the resources of a person. The task of Human Resources Development needs to be understood as an inter-disciplinary approach from a Biblical, Theological, Philosophical, Psychological and 'Andragogical' perspectives in order to be effectively developed as a Lay Training model to enable people to grow and to fulfil God's purposes, for the humanity.

Then, a human Resources Development Model would have the following dimensions or foundations since we consider Lay Training as a Development Task and see it has Laity Formation :

- (a) Biblical foundations on the nature of man.
- (b) Theological affirmation about the Unity of the laity.
- (c) Sociological foundations of change and growth.
- (d) Psychological foundations on aspects of human development.

(e) Philosophical foundations about the process of learning.

(f) Andragogical foundations on models of adult learning.

(g) Goals and objectives.

We will try to elaborate on each dimension—not to give an ultimate definition or to exhaust a treatise on the subject—but to initiate the reader into the kind of input that should go in to a lay training programme of a model of this kind.

Biblical Foundations on the nature of man

Sexist language seems to be unavoidable in setting out the Biblical foundations on the nature of man. This is not an excuse but to affirm that our reference to man invariably includes woman as the Hebrew word Adam refers to the humanity incorporating the male and the female. The corporate nature of man can be spelt out in different aspects :

(1) Soul and the corporate nature of man

For an Indian mind, placed in the context of a Hindu religious society, the concept of man is a dual concept referring to the person and his soul. A large percentage of Indian Christians would believe in a soul within man.

Unless a lay training programme starts with the distinction between the Greek thought and the Hebrew thought of soul, the man in the pew will be much confused in his thinking. The premises are as follows :—

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Greek thought</i> | : Soul is like a bird in a cage. It is separate from man. It can be released as an entity. |
| <i>Hindu thought</i> | : Soul migrates, takes different forms of life. |
| <i>Hebrew thought</i> | : Soul is the whole personality of man. |

The Psalmist sings in Ps. 103, 'Praise the Lord O my Soul and all that is within me.' So it is the whole personality that is referred to as the soul.

A dialectic understanding is called for here. Nephesh is the living soul—the living person. The living nature is understood as 'Nephesh grows'.¹ It grows by expansion. Expansion is not occupying others territories. It is giving one self. So a person grows by giving himself to others. Such is the understanding of the word soul in Hebrew thought. This is a Biblical foundation which would go a long way in enabling the laity in an understanding of themselves, others and their inter-relatedness. It is, against human nature, not to grow—not to give yourself for others.

(2) Sin and the corporate nature of man :

There is a high degree of individualism found in the ordinary lives of the man in the pew. Students of Church History can trace it to the trends brought into the Church by different traditions at different stages in history. A present-day tendency is to consider acts of 'dos' and 'dons' as being sinful or not. While it is important that individuals are encouraged to develop sober habits, it becomes much more important to enable the laity to widen their horizon and see how a whole society can be ignorant of the injustices it is perpetuating as in the case of untouchability in certain societies in India which

¹ P. Ross Kinsler ed, Ministry by the people p. 4 WCC publications (1983).

² Pedersen, Johannes, *Israel : Its Life and Culture* London : Oxford University Press, 1961.

accounts for the corporate nature of sin. In certain societies people believe that soul cannot be touched by man's doings because of the dualistic belief—Hence we see the importance of an understanding of the corporate nature of man to eliminate corporate sin in the society.

(3) *Salvation and the Corporate Nature of man :*

Time and again ministers have preached on the soul going to heaven or the salvation of the soul. This has led the laity to believe that salvation is for after life. People have considered all the world as evil forgetting the purposes of God for creation. As Psalmist says in Ps. 24 : 1, The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. As St. Paul says, the whole creation groans in travail for liberation. The corporate nature of man does not provide for the exclusive salvation of the soul rather it calls for the salvation of all God's creation. The WCC documents now talk about the *Integrity of creation* referring to the all inclusive nature of salvation, a direction which is essential in lay training.

(4) *The Personhood of man and the 'enabler' concept :*

The Biblical affirmation on the nature of man is stronger in presenting man as a person as distinct from objects. The scope of the concept is so broad that it embraces both the philosophical and educational foundations for understanding the nature of man. It suffices to mention here how God sees man as a person to live in constant relationships.

St. John in Jn. 1 : 1 says that, 'the Son was face to face with God'. This paves the way for inter-personal relationship or a person to person relationship. In a person to object relationship, like in the case of the player and the football, there is no mutuality—no response—but only engineering.

Laity as persons, enjoy the will and freedom given to them by God in creation. This freedom and will become operable because of the possibility of the person to person relationship.

Then it becomes imperative on the part of the lay trainers not to treat the laity as objects but to develop a relationship of mutual respect and interaction maintaining the person to person relationship rather than a person to object relationship. Thus a lay trainer becomes an 'enabler'. So 'lecturing at' the laity comes under question !

(5) *The Formation of the Laity :*

The word Formation is preferred for 'training' or 'equipping' for various reasons :

Training has the undertone of human engineering that affects the dignity of the individual. Equipping has the overtone of imposition from outside. Whereas Formation envisages inner quality or gifts which the man is endowed with. As we read in I Cor. 12 : The Holy Spirit endows man with various gifts viz. the gift to discern, the gift to preach, the gift to heal and so on. These gifts need to be discerned, used and developed in the given environment.

The concept of formation refers to such a growth process where—in an individual is helped to discover and develop his potential in given environment. It is like the vine branches which bring forth the fruit while they draw their succour from the Vine, but pruned by the gardener. Thus the enabler provides the environment of motivation and opportunities of interactions while the individual blooms forth because of the potential. This process is referred to as the laity formation.

The Potter's vision in Jeremiah 14 : refers to 'metanoiaia'—the repentance of heart, in the process of formation, rather than God using man as clay which off-sets the Biblical 'Person to Person' relationship concept of human development.

* *Theological affirmations about the unity of the Laity* *

1. *Biblical references to the development of offices in the early church :*

As we read in the Acts, elders were set apart, when the case of widows came to the forefront. Thus the office of the elders came to be recognized.

We come across references to the office of the Presbyters and Bishops as we read Timothy.

St. Paul refers to the different roles people played as a call to a particular obedience. So he says some are called to be apostles, evangelists etc. (Acts 1 : 17 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 4-30 ; Eph. 4 : 18.)

2. *Unity Model in the Father and the Son :*

In spite of different offices in the church which are only different roles essentially, the church does not see it as a matter of division rather it sees it as a unity in diversity. In the High Priestly Prayer in Jn. 17 Jesus prays 'that they all may be one'. He takes the model of Unity in Godhead the Father, Son and Holy Spirit even though these have significance for different roles. Thus Jesus points out to the unity, Saying—'Even as we are one'.

In other words the hierarchy in Laity, if any, is functional and would not create a class.

3. *Images of the Laity :*

With this unity in mind Biblical writers have introduced several images of the Laity. Such as (a) Saints, (b) Priesthood of all believers, (c) Salt Christians, (d) The light of the world, (e) Branches of the same vine etc. All these images also affirm the corporate nature of the Laity and its ministry.

4. *The Parson and the Person in the pew :*

Traditionally it has been thought that the Parson is the one who is responsible for preaching, reflecting, acting and to be in charge of the mission of the church. There was a one-way communication and compartmentalisation in roles. The person in the pew was supposed to be a passive recipient. So we find the categories of Sunday Christians, festival Christians and ritual Christians who seek Baptism, Marriage and Burial in the church.

Our understanding of the unity of the nature of the Laity with regard to its calling and mission makes a radical departure from the passive position. Now it is the whole church which is in mission. An understanding of the Church being in mission is an understanding of the whole laity called to be God's witnesses in the world.

5. *Laity-called out :*

An understanding of the church as 'the called out' helps us to realise that the whole laity is called out of the world for a special mission. Therefore the role of minister, apostle or an evangelist alone cannot be considered as a call. The whole laity has received the call to be in mission, of course, according to the gifts received which accounts for the various roles (I Cor. 12).

6. *An inclusive Laity :*

The inclusive nature of the Laity does not leave out women on any account. As a matter of fact the Bible refers to the various roles played by women (Acts 18 : 26 ; Acts 21 : 9 ; Rom. 16 : 1-13). The women are very much a part of the mission in as much as they are part and parcel of the Laity.

Christian Concerns in the National Policy of Education

PROFESSOR W. A. I. HOPPER, M.Sc., M.Ed., Ph.D.
Madras

1.0 Introduction

For the first time, the people of India participated in the process which gave birth to the NPE in May, 1986. The Ministry of Education, Government of India brought out an 117-page publication in August, 1985 with the title: *Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective*. This was translated into regional languages and made available to the public for discussion. State Governments and Voluntary bodies organised a number of Seminars to discuss the document under reference. The Church of South India, Synod Council of Education organised a consultation and produced the following document under the dynamic leadership of its Chairperson Most Rev. Dr. Victor Premsagar: '*Challenge of Education: Response of the CSI*'. This was sent to the concerned officials in the Central Government. The participation of the CSI was well received and appreciated.

After deliberations and discussion for a year, the opinions and view-points received from thousands of people and organisations were computerised for consolidating the data. The participatory approach adopted by the Government is a truly Christian democratic methodology. The Bible presents a number of occasions when God participated in the life and development of his people on this earth. God participated through the process of direct personal intervention (Gen. 3:9) and conveying appropriate messages through chosen leaders such as Moses and John and a number of prophets in the old testament scriptures. In the New Testament, the culmination of God's participation in human affairs is manifested through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5-13).

2.0 Human Resource Development (HRD)

The main thrust of the NPE is HRD. The following excerpts from the NPE is quoted below: The numbers within brackets indicate the paragraphs in the original Policy Document:

- (a) In the Indian way of thinking, A HUMAN BEING IS A POSITIVE ASSET and a PRECIOUS NATIONAL RESOURCE which needs to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care, coupled with dynamism. Each individual's growth presents a different range of problems and requirements, at every stage—from the womb to the tomb. The catalytic action of education in this complex and dynamic growth process needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity (1.10).

- (b) Life in the coming decades is likely to bring new tension together with unprecedented opportunities. To enable the people to benefit in the environment will require new designs of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. The coming generations should have the ability to internalise new ideas constantly and creatively. They have to be imbued with a strong commitment to HUMAN VALUES and to SOCIAL JUSTICE. All this implies better education (1.14).
- (c) In our national perception education is essentially for all. This is fundamental to OUR ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT, MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL (2.1).
- (d) LIFE-LONG EDUCATION is a cherished goal of the educational process (3.11).
- (e) Recognising the HOLISTIC NATURE OF PROPER CHILD DEVELOPMENT viz., nutrition, health and social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) will receive high priority and be suitably integrated with the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, where possible (5.2).
- (f) ... the Union Government would accept a larger responsibility to reinforce the national and integrative character of education, to maintain quality and standards (including these of the teaching profession at all levels) to study and monitor the educational requirements of the country as a whole in regard to man power for development, to cater to the needs of research and advanced study, to look after the international aspects of education, culture and HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT and, in general, to promote excellence at all levels of the educational pyramid throughout the country (3.13).
- (g) The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make EDUCATION AS A FORCEFUL TOOL FOR THE CULTIVATION OF SOCIAL, ETHICAL AND MORAL VALUES (8.4).

God, the Eternal Source

In the O.T. scriptures, God has been the eternal source for His people in their day-to-day life. For forty years they depended on Him and Him alone in their journey as

pilgrims through the wilderness. Similarly, in the N.T. scriptures, we find that the Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal source for His disciples to behold His glory and received the fullness of grace and truth (John 1:14-16). The Lord Jesus Christ is viewed as a Master Educator involved in the Human Resource Development of a variety of people through His Ministry of teaching, preaching and healing. After the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the disciples depended on the Holy Spirit for their daily walk after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-39).

2.1. Focus on the Human being on Ancient Earth

The Bible focuses on the human being on ancient earth. Among the creation of all matter (living and non-living), there was a special creation of HUMAN BEINGS (Gen. 1:26, 27). God took special care to provide all the basic necessities of life (Gen. 2:8-15). God questions humans and not animals though the humans put the blame on an animal (Gen. 3:9-13). God established a covenant with a human being who walked with him (Gen. 6:8). God's concern for redeeming the human race from total destruction is an act of grace.

2.2. Focus on the Common Person

The Lord Jesus Christ was involved in the development of ordinary people into extraordinary people in His ministry on this earth about 2000 Years ago. If we analyse the life of Peter, we will be able to observe the sequential stages thoughtfully planned by our Lord for His developments in the process of life-long-education. What are the STRUGGLES OF JESUS?

(i) Searching Jesus

Jesus looked for Peter at HIS WORK SPOT (Matth. 4:18-20; Luke 5:4-10; Mark 1:16-18).

(ii) Structuring Jesus

Jesus structured a variety of LEARNING EXPERIENCES for Peter.

- (a) Learning experiences centred around teaching.
- (b) Learning experiences centred around preaching.
- (c) Learning experiences centred around healing.
- (d) Learning experiences centred around controlling nature.
- (e) Learning experiences centred around his divinity.

(iii) Serving Jesus

During the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ personally demonstrated (John 13:15) the way of service in true humility (Luke 22:27).

(iv) Suffering Jesus

As predicted (Isa. 53) Jesus is the 'Suffering servant'. He suffered at the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for the sake of the sin of the world (1 Peter 2:21). He suffered mentally when Peter denied Him thrice (Luke 22:61).

(v) Strengthening Jesus

Jesus after His Resurrection, appeared to Peter in order to strengthen him (John 21:3-17).

The NPE (Part IV 4.1 to 4.8) lays special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of S.Cs., S.Ts., Minorities and the Handicapped who have been denied equality so far.

2.3. Focus on the Word of the Holy Spirit

The NPE (1986) was followed by the publication of another important document in August, 1986 with the title: 'PROGRAMME OF ACTION' (POA). Both the documents have placed the teacher as an important person involved in the transaction of the Curriculum in real class rooms so that the potential in the learners is facilitated towards maximal growth resulting in all-round development.

The committed Christian teacher is one who depends upon the Holy Spirit indwelling in Him (John 15:17; 1 Corinth. 3:16), sanctifying him day after day (Rom. 15:16), renewing him in strength (11 Corinth. 4:16), comforting him when he partakes of the sufferings of Christ (11 Corinth. 1:4-5) and providing on eternal source of Wisdom and Power (1 Corinth 12:8; 2:13 Rom. 15:19). The Christian teacher gets transformed into a Christian educator dedicated to the process of drawing out the best from every child, youth or adult under his care through the process of struggling but obtaining Victory following the personal example of the Master Educator himself?

3.0. Developmental Perspectives of the NPE Reflected in the Bible

In addition to the main thought of HRD and some of the major concerns indicated above, some of the educational dimensions of development are discussed in this section.

3.1. Education for Liberation

In the NPE document at 4.9 it is written as follows: 'Our ancient scriptures define education as that which liberates i.e., provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression'. By and large, the weaker rural sections of our people belonging to the poorest of the poor and oppressed by social structures, systems and by these in positions of power. The root cause of being oppressed is ignorance. They are in darkness and have not yet seen the light. If you examine the education system, it also acts as an oppressive force combing the minds of the learners. Rigidity is enforced and flexibility is curtailed. Children are pressurised and compelled to learn by heart portions marked on their textbooks as answers for pre-determined questions. There is a rat-race among institutions to obtain ranks in public examinations by hook or crook. An unhealthy rivalry and competition drives children to become part of the oppressive system to develop Killer instincts and use them at their weaker brothers and sisters. Children, by nature are cooperative and possess a nature to help others but they are corrupted by the system which encourages a dangerous trend of out threat competition.

Children need to be liberated from the clutches of the syllabus, examinations, textbooks and the authoritative teacher and parent.

The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world with the sole purpose of liberating people from bondages. The rigid customs and traditions were enforced on people and made themselves. There were people who considered others as outcaste. He called these oppressions and dominating people as hypocrites. They were considering the less privileged people as sinners when they had a big beam in their own eyes.

3.2. Education for Excellence, Equity and Social Justice

The NPE mentions the above as broad aims (at 5.15) for setting up Navodaya Schools one each for a district

in the country. Is it possible to link-up the above three? There should be opportunities for all to have quality education. Excellence in education is a birth right for all irrespective of the capacity for one to pay for it. What happens in our society today? Who has the opportunity to enter Schools of Excellence? Many meritorious people are not able to enter into institutes of excellence for one reason or the other. The poorer and weaker sections of the people have been domesticated so much that they are not able to even to sit for a test or face an interview. The communication medium in a foreign tongue acts as a dominant culture and silences the contestant for ever. Where is social justice?

Equality of opportunity for one reason or the other is not operational in a given society. Many in a restricted topographical situation are denied the right to have quality education. The mushrooming of good schools in cities have denied the rural poor to have even an opportunity to seek for admission. What about our Church Schools? Where are the reputed institutions situated? The pioneers started them for the benefit of the rural poor (The classical example is C.M.C. Hospital at Vellore). But later on the authorities of the Church preached about looking after the least of our brethren but started institutions for the elite as they are the rural rulers.

The Lord Jesus Christ had a preferential option to identify himself with the downtrodden, the hungry and the sick so that he could bring cheer and comfort for them.

3.3. Education for Cultural Creativity

The NPE uses the phrase 'Energisation of the Cultural Creativity of the people' at 4.10. In the section at 8.1 on reorienting the content and process of education, the following statement is recorded: 'De-Culturisation, de-humanisation and alienation must be avoided at all costs. Education can and must bring about the fine synthesis, between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural traditions'.

Unfortunately Christianity in India has been identified with colonisation and exploitation because people thought that it was the foreign rulers who brought the religion. At that time, any one with a name spelt in Roman script was considered to be a Christian!

The essence of Christianity as reflected in the Bible is that it is a way of life following the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He condemned exploitation of ordinary people by the High Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees. He also rebuked the so called high caste people who kept the low caste people who kept the low caste people at a distance (marginalised and alienated from the main stream of public life). For example the Samaritan woman was bewildered when Jesus being a Jew asked for water to drink from her at the well. Finally, Jesus Christ was the only model of putting into practice the 'Servanthood Culture', always willing to 'Serve and not to be served' and finally to lay down His life to redeem the whole world from bondage.

True Christianity cuts across man-made cultural barriers and creates transformed people concerned with all round development of the human (body, mind and spirit). Several man-made social barriers and partition walls, such as the 'Caste system' has been broken down because of the creative Christian cultural revolution taking place within the church today. Only a beginning has been made but it is highly significant and relevant in a country like ours.

4.0. Challenge before us

The NPE has been accepted by our Parliament. It is a policy document. It has to be analysed and studied in the proper perspective along with POA. After internalising the radical ideas and suggested practical prescriptions, the following has to be done:

- (a) The Board of Theological Education has to evolve its own POA as an implementation strategy for HRD at Doctoral, Masters and Bachelors degree levels.
- (b) The CSI Synod Council of Education has to evolve its own POA as an implementation strategy for HRD at the Professional Education, Teacher Education, College Education, and School Education levels.

When 'a' and 'b' have been accomplished at the Board and Council levels, selected institutions which are innovative-minded and open-ended with competent staff should be encouraged to develop their own POA for implementation over a specific period of time for their target population.



Grace Kennett Foundation Hospital Madurai

DR. S. RAVIKUMAR,* M.S.

Beauty Workers' Children :

Bishop D. Pothirajulu, the Deputy Moderator of the Church of South India, who is also a member of the executive committee of the hospital, in a solemn service, inaugurated the Beauty Workers' Children's sponsorship programme. Mrs. Pothirajulu presented books to all the children.

We have named our Sanitary Department as 'BEAUTY DEPARTMENT' so that they feel more involved in the life of the hospital. We always feel that they don't have enough stimulation to put their children in schools. They are more interested in sending them for some job and get some money to satisfy their hunger. They never feel the importance of education and the future. It was always working in my mind that we must educate their children and try to get a Collector, a pastor, an Engineer, a Doctor, a Professor and a Lawyer out of these children. Even if they go to school because of the financial stress they never send them to standard schools or verify whether their children attend the schools regularly.

If we want to lift them up, our basic concern must also be to educate their children with better environment and stimulation. Of course, when they are put up in a single school, it will be easy for us to follow them and have more effective methods of teachings. We have selected the Seventh Day Adventist school, which is near our hospital and our children also read there. This will enable us to reduce the gap between our children and Beauty Workers' children and in addition it will bring out better human relationship in our hospital community life. We have represented our need to the Seventh Day Adventist school and they also have agreed to help us.

Mazhalai Illam Children Sponsorship Programme :

Few Mazhalai Illam children attend a school nearby. Now we also want to put other Mazhalai Illam children who are above the age of 3 years as it will help them to grow and get a proper stimulation of environment. Even though we want to be everything for them we are not able to satisfy our concerns and we are trying their parents. Some of them are older children and it is becoming a difficult job for us to look for parents who can understand them. So, at this juncture we feel that we are responsible for their education and Social background.

* Dr. S. Ravikumar won three Gold Medals (Anatomy, Pathology and Surgery from Madurai Medical College) is the Medical Superintendent.

Outreach Programme :

Slum Health Work :

We work in 11 slums around Madurai, taking care of the preventive and curative health needs. Two doctors visit the slum every day and 18th of every month is declared as SLUM CAMP DAY in our hospital. We get the children and pregnant women from our slums and immunise them against, Diphtheria, Tetanus, pertussis Polio myelitis and Measles. We have also camps at slums on the first Fridays of every month and attend to their health needs. Sick patients are admitted here and treated free. Total number of population benefited were 22,000.

Health Seminars :

Once in two months we conduct seminars on Child Health—slum and Rural Development where we invite the slum-village people to participate along with the health team. It will be a 2 days seminar when 150-200 people will participate. It helps us to understand the depth of problems and make us closer to the slums and villages. It gives us opportunities to clear the doubts of the underprivileged and sharing bridges the gap between Government Officials and slum dwellers. We invite Government Officers from Family Welfare Board, from Social health Work, nutrition centres and Corporation Sanitary Department. We also invite professors from colleges, who share the needs of adult education and role of mother in family social life.

Village Health Work :

We work in 7 villages attending to the different needs. We work on preventive and curative health needs. We visit the village once in 15 days, a wide population is covered. Total number of population covered will be 20,000.

Mass Immunisation and Work among Handicapped Children :

We started our first Mass Immunisation on February 18th of 1986 and this day was observed as Special Camp Day for slum Health needs. Following that, every 18th of the month is declared as Slum Camp Day in our hospital and Mass Immunisation is carried out bringing all the children from slums and villages. So far we have completed 30 Mass Immunisation Camps and the slums where we work are declared as TOTALLY IMMUNISED. We maintain follow-up records with the help of Slum Teachers, Volunteers and Social workers and see that no child is ignored.

Special camps were also combined with Mass Immunisation Programmes. We are building up the awareness of a balanced diet with a minimum income available and a Nutritional Day Care Centre is to be commissioned shortly which will provide a nutritious diet for the ill-nourished children, educate the mothers for a balanced diet and encourage research activities by involving social organisations.

Bishop D. Pothirajulu, the Deputy Moderator of the Church of South India who is also the Executive Committee member of the Hospital in a solemn service where all the workers' children and the staff members of the Hospital were present, inaugurated the Beauty Workers' Children Sponsorship Programme.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

JAFFNA DIOCESE

James Richards Hall

During the visit of the Moderator and his team to the Jaffna Diocese of the C.S.I. from the 13th to the 17th of June 1988, the Moderator laid the foundation stone for the James Richards Memorial Hall of Residence at the Jangai Christian Theological Seminary and Institute for Lay People at Chunnakam, Jaffna. The Rev. James Richards, it will be remembered was one of the five young men of the Haystack Group from Williams College in the United States, which met in 1806, and decided to found the first American Foreign Missionary Society, and prayed for an open way to the regions beyond. The Missionary Society named the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.) now known as the U.C.B.W.M. was founded in 1810. James Richards was the only one of the Haystack Group, who went out as a missionary. He came to Jaffna in 1816, and unfortunately died within six years in 1822. His body lies buried at the Mission Graveyard at Tellippalai. It is significant and very appropriate that the Diocese has decided to commemorate his name with the main Hall of Residence at the seminary and Institute for Lay People at Chunnakam. The Moderator, the Most Rev. Dr. P. Victor Premasagar laid the foundation stone on Wednesday, the 15th of June 1988. A moving prayer on the occasion was offered by the Rev. M. Azariah, the General Secretary of the C.S.I. Synod. Mr. James Balraj of the C.S.I., C.T.V.T. was also present. The Bishop of the Diocese, the members of the staff, students and well wishers were present on the occasion.

New Developments—South of Elephant Pass

Barathipuram

The Jaffna Diocese has been in recent years concentrating on Evangelism, Relief, Rehabilitation and Development work in the Northern Province, south of Elephant Pass. The most recent developments are the opening of a new centre at Barathipuram on the 24th February, 1988. Around this centre the Diocese has already completed and given 55 houses to refugee families. Another 45 houses are under construction. More than 90 per cent of the families are Hindu refugees. At the centre, there is also a Day Care Centre, looking after more than 60 children below the age of five. There is also a Vocational Training centre providing sewing and tailoring classes to more than 50 girls. More such programmes are being planned for the community around this centre.

Konavil

At Konavil, about 12 miles to the west of Kilinochchi, a centre and place of worship was opened on the 15th of August, 1987. Of the few Christian families around the area, there are seven who originally came from Kerala with a Syrian Christian background. The church has been appropriately named St. Thomas' Church, Konavil. A large St. Thomas Syrian cross stands prominently in front of the church. At this centre also there are about 70 children under five years looked after at the Day Care Centre.

—BISHOP AMBALAVANAR

RAYALASEEMA DIOCESE

The Committee members of the proposed JCM Community Hall assembled in the Church after service on 10-7-1988 under the Chairmanship of Dr. H. B. Gideon, General Convener of the JCM Community Hall Committee—Rev. Dass Babu, Editor of *Churchman*, the official magazine of the Church of South India, and Director of Communication, Synod, Madras was a special invitee to the gathering.

In the course of deliberations, the following suggestions were made to make the proposed Community Hall a viable unit.

- (a) (i) To use the Community Hall as a Dialogue Centre.
- (ii) To associate youth organisation and its activities.
- (iii) To exhibit arts and skills of Christian youth.
- (iv) To associate the Women's Fellowship activities and
- (v) To accommodate international get-together conferences and such other Christian activities that are conducive to promote the growth and development of the Christian faith.
- (b) To pass a resolution to raise donations for the proposed Community Hall (i) from the local members of the Church by taking pledge letters from the members to donate one month's salary in instalments. (ii) to make appeals to the members or families affiliated or associated with the Church but presently working abroad to make liberal donations to this project. (iii)

to approach donor agencies through proper channel to finance the project with an interest free loan or an outright grant.

- (c) To pass a resolution to construct the Community Hall in the North East corner of the Mission Compound in the site demarked by the Bishop and the Property board of the Rayalaseema Diocese.
- (d) To arrange to call for a public meeting at the site of the proposed Community Hall involving (i) Women Fellowship (ii) the Youth Association and extend invitation to the leaders of the town.

DR. H. B. GIDEON

Treasurer and General Convener

REV. K. SHEDRACH

Presbyter-in-Charge

MR. S. Y. DASS

Secretary

DORNAKAL DIOCESE

Rt. Rev. D. Noah Samuel, Bishop in Dornakal has presented a Cassette Tape Recorder to Rev. Lalsingh Lazarus in a meeting held at Hyderabad recently which was attended by the offices of the Dornakal and Karimnagar dioceses. Rt. Rev. K. E. Swamidas, Bishop in Karimnagar, Mr. G. A. Prasad, Mr. John Wesley, Rev. Sadanandam, Rev. Samuel, Rev. Theodore—all from Karimnagar diocese, and Rev. A. Rajaratnam, Mr. M. Edwin Rao, Mr. K. S. Azariah, Rev. G. John—all from Dornakal diocese were present.

The Cassette Tape Recorder was made available by the Communications Department with an intention to record songs and prayers in Lambadi language. The Department has provided training to Rev. Lalsingh Lazarus in the electronic media, particularly in recording. A workshop on song and drama for Lambadi Christians has been planned.

KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

Mr. G. A. Prasada Rao who worked as the Treasurer for about 40 years in the undivided Dornakal diocese and later on in Karimnagar diocese, retired recently. A farewell function was arranged in Hyderabad where many spoke on the yeoman services rendered by him. Bishop K. E. Swamidas presided over and Bishop D. Noah Samuel spoke on the occasion.

Mr. N. M. John Wesley who had been shouldering many responsibilities as accounts officer, has been appointed as the Treasurer of the Karimnagar diocese.

NANDYAL DIOCESE

Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Rt. Rev. Ryder Devapriam, the Bishop of Nandyal diocese, on the 18th May 1988 by the General Theological Seminary at New York. **We Congratulate the Bishop.**

A Retreat for the Pastors and Pastors' wives was arranged by the Diocese in Nandyal. Bishop L. V. Azariah, Rev. Abhisekham Bunyan and Mrs. Jayamma Bunyan were the speakers. The Holy Eucharist was celebrated by Revd. Jayamma and Rev. Abhisekham (Kurnool). Bishop Ryder Devapriam took personal interest in making all the arrangements.

MADURAI-RAMNAD DIOCESE

The Diocese has celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Missionary Festival and Sale on the 6th and 7th of August '88 in O.C.P.M. Girls' Higher Secondary School, Madurai. Mrs. Rani Moses, wife of Rt. Rev. William Moses, the Bishop of Coimbatore Diocese, inaugurated the festival and sale. Earlier, Bishop William Moses delivered the address, emphasising the importance of evangelism and witness. Rt. Rev. Dr. Pothirajulu, the Bishop of the diocese presided over the well-attended and well-organised festival.

It is an annual feature and the sale proceeds, which have been increasing every year, will be spent for missionary work. This year we collected about Rs. 1,75,000. But the real joy was to see 25 young people dedicating themselves to the missionary task particularly to work in the Cumbum Valley. Of course, the diocese has already sent Mr. Dorairaju to work in Medak Diocese (Bainsa) who is there for the last 8 years.

Miss A. J. Moses welcomed the gathering. The opening song was sung by Natham Pastorate and dance performance was given by Noyes School. Mrs. Pothirajulu, the convener of the Board of Missions proposed the vote of thanks. Rev. Jesudas, Deputy Chairman, Mr. Daniel Manoharan, Mr. Rajasingh Warrior the secretaries, Prof. P. T. Chellappa, the Treasurer and Rev. P. Chellappa, the Executive Officer for the Relief and Development Dept. were also present.

—REV. MISS RUBY ALAGUMANI,
Secretary.

NEWS from *All Over*

'THE CHURCH IN BURMA'

L. R. BAWLA

This item is adapted from the material distributed by the London-based Council for World Mission. Bawla is mission secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Burma.

For the past two decades, the yearly average of new believers has been a much higher figure. In October we had recorded only 41 new souls for 1987—by no means a sign of sluggishness of the Church. Emphasis was given that year to the training of field workers, reshaping modes of work, consolidating the new believers.

More haste, less speed. To go faster, training of workers to cope with the demanding task of pastoring more than 3000 new believers won for Christ is compulsory, and having housing facilities for all workers in the field, especially regional towns which serve as sub-centres for mission work is now priority.

We therefore serve notice to our adversary, Satan, that there is not and never will be, a turning back on our part. We shall go forward, always.

With monetary help from CWM, an artesian well to the depth of 140 feet has been dug at Letpanchaung town, ten miles from Tahan-kalemyo. The water springs up to four feet above ground. This will be enough to give a water supply to more than 100 families in the town, three fish ponds within the farm, and 300 coconut trees which are beginning to bear fruit.

Last September the Burmese government issued an ordinance saying that 25—, 35—, and 75—kyat currency notes issued by the Union of Burma Bank had ceased to be legal tender with immediate effect. Thus an estimated 75 per cent of money in circulation suddenly became worthless.

Few Presbyterians, perhaps five per cent of them, have their money in banks, as most of them live in rural areas. Therefore, church-giving of all kinds suddenly fell deeply, and roughly 90 per cent of Church money became 'dead' in the hands of treasurers of various church organizations.

The exact figure of dead money cannot be determined now, but my own estimation is that not less than 200,000 kyats meant for synod/assembly budgets is worthless. An equal amount of money may have become dead at local church treasuries.

What impact this financial crisis will have on church life is anybody's guess. Normal church work and activities are sure to be minimised. It may even be necessary to recall some of our missionaries unless some sort of 'miracle' is happening

It may not be normal practice for a mission board to run an orphanage. But the Presbyterian Church of Burma Mission Board does. The undertaking, though, is not voluntary. It was forced upon us.

Love knows no boundary. Many Dhai infants die because of amoral tribal customs. Babies born out of wedlock whose parents cannot marry due to tribal rites rarely survive. Their father usually puts them in a basket and hangs them in a tree at the outskirts of the village and the child dies.

To save the children's lives and in the hope that this bad practice and custom may be stopped, an orphanage came to exist there. A baby home is now under construction at Mindat town. (EPS)

'THE CHURCH IN HONG KONG'

MR. KWOK NAI-WANG

Kwok is the outgoing general secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council. This is excerpted from a presentation, 'The Hong Kong Experiment—One Country, Two Systems: A Report on Current Hong Kong Situation to European Friends', he gave during a visit to Europe in June. In 1984, after two years of negotiation, the governments of China and the United Kingdom signed an agreement under which Hong Kong reverts from UK to Chinese control in mid-1997.

. . . . After the Second World War, the church in Hong Kong, aided first by the support of overseas churches, then by the Hong Kong government and the wider community (partly through the Community Chest and the Jockey Club) did well in responding to the needs of the community. They served hundreds and thousands of refugees from China in the 1950s. Time and again the church took the initiative in relief work, in social work, in medicine and health, and in education. Right now, more than 20 per cent of the medical work, more than 40 per cent of the education and more than 60 per cent of the social welfare are provided by the churches or church agencies. The church in Hong Kong did more than its share as a service provider.

The Church from time to time also supported, or at least permitted, Christians or Christian agencies to speak up on public policies affecting the livelihood of the masses. On the whole, all these efforts were well appreciated.

But since the Sino-British accord came into force, the needs of Hong Kong have changed. The most crucial ones are the development of a representative government in Hong Kong, the nurturing of political leaders, and political education. The Church on the whole is not equipped to do these. Worse still, the institutional church is so afraid of change that it views those Christians who respond to the changing needs as trouble-makers. There have been signs of suppression within the institutional churches in the past two years in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Christian Council, whose membership consists of 19 mainline denominations or ecumenical organizations, used to play a leading role in responding to the needs of society. In the past two years, this role of the council has faded out almost completely.

Many ecumenical leaders and strong supporters of the council were not sent by their respective churches. With-

out them, the council's executive committee became very inward-looking. The leadership explained that there was no consensus within the member churches and organizations regarding how to deal with controversial issues, hence the council should not act. In some these church leaders have made the council respond in the same conservative way as the institutional churches.

The institutional churches may find it difficult to speak because of the many burdens they have to bear. It is precisely for this reason that they should allow the council to act more freely (which has been the model of operation in the council's 34 years of history). In this crucial period of time, the church, not a party with vested interests, has a significant role to play. It can be the voice of the voiceless. It should try to make sure that the future of Hong Kong is not for a few, but for all.

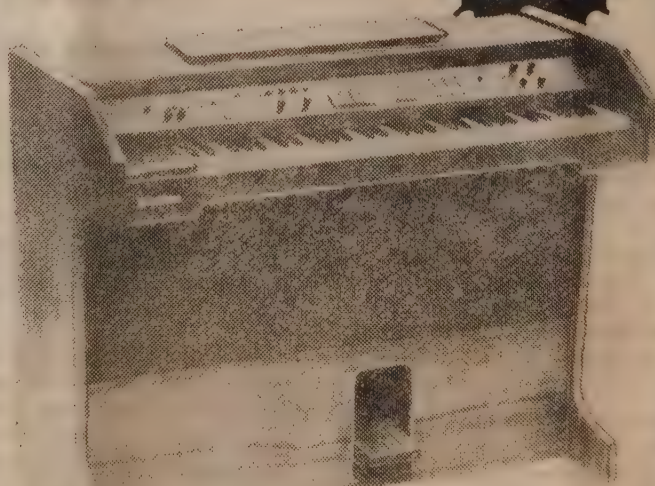
If the institutional churches fail to respond to the dire needs of the entire society, then new Christian organizations will be formed. One hundred concerned Christians have recently founded the Hong Kong Christian Institute. This will attempt to mobilize Christians to address the current political needs in Hong Kong. ... (EPS)

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Manager (Human Resources and Administration)

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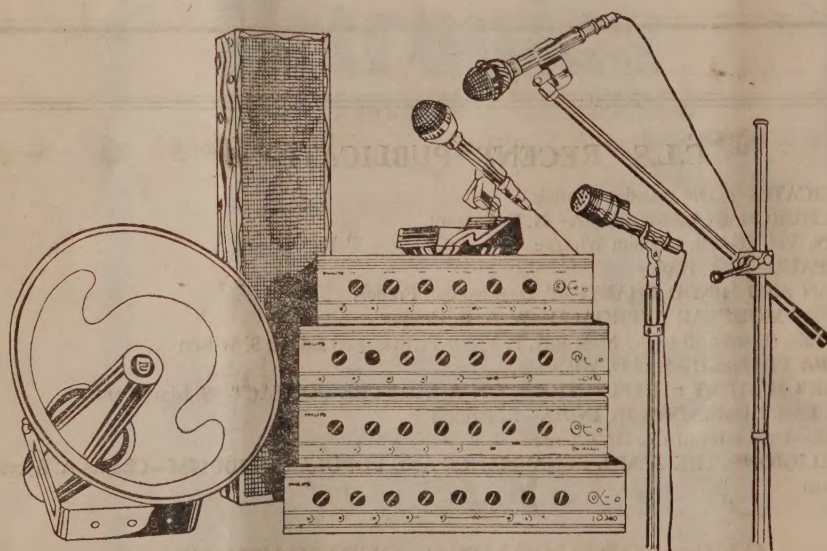


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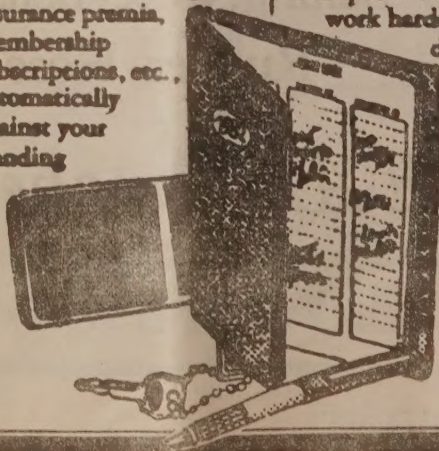
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